(e) if so, what are the steps taken to reduce backlog in courts and whether more Judges are being appointed in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI H.R. BHARDWAJ): (a) Government has no information on any such remark made by the Chief Justice of India. However, Supreme Court has reduced summer vacation from 8 weeks to 7 weeks.

(b) As per the latest information available, a total of 48,838 cases were pending in the Supreme Court as on 31st August, 2008.

(c) and (d) The matter relating to setting up and functioning of Evening Courts was discussed in the Conference of Chief Ministers and Chief Justices held on 19th April, 2008. It was resolved that either Evening/Morning Courts be set up or Special Judicial Magistrates/Special Metropolitan Magistrates be appointed, to deal with cases involving petty offences, including traffic and municipal offences. The resolution has been sent to the State Governments and the High Courts for follow-up action. Evening Courts are already functional in the State of Gujarat and Delhi.

(e) Government has taken a number of steps to reduce backlog in Courts. 163 posts of Judges have been created in various High Courts. Government has already introduced The Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Amendment Bill, 2008 in the Lok Sabha on 29.4.2008 to increase the number of judges in Supreme Court from 25 to 30 excluding the Chief Justice of India. Schemes for Development of Infrastructural Facilities for Judiciary and computerization for all Courts in the country are being implemented. Fast Track Courts have been instituted for speedy disposal of long pending Sessions cases and the cases involving undertrials in jails. Alternative modes of disposal including mediation, negotiation and arbitration have been encouraged. With a view to ensuring expeditious disposal of cases, the Civil Procedure Code and Criminal Procedure Code have been amended and the concept of 'Plea Bargaining' has been introduced.

Coal shortages at NALCO

†2240. SHRI RUDRA NARAYAN PANY: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the National Aluminium Company Ltd. (NALCO) situated in Orissa, is facing the problems every year due to coal crisis;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the measures being taken by the company to tackle the coal crisis; and

(d) whether it is also a fact that the Alumina powder is being sold by this nationalized company to its rival domestic companies?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES (SHRI B.K. HANDIQUE): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. National Aluminium Company Limited (NALCO) has informed that they had shortfall in indigenous coal supply in the years 2005-06, 2007-08 and 2008-09. For meeting this shortall, the Company imported coal, as per details below:-

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

Year	Quantity imported in Tonnes
2005-06	2,08,000
2007-08	1,40,000
2008-09	2,58,000 (upto November, 08)

(c) To overcome this recurring problem, NALCO has applied for increase in its coal linkage. Separately, the Company is trying to meet its requirement by procuring coal from e-auction and through import.

(d) NALCO has informed that they had sold 1948 tonnes of alumina to Bharat Aluminium Company Limited (BALCO) in the months of September and October, 2008.

Hoda Committee recommendations on Mineral Policy

2241. SHRI DHARAM PAL SABHARWAL: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether all the recommendations of the Hoda Committee on Mineral Policy, which submitted its report in 2005 have been accepted;

(b) if not, which recommendations have been accepted fully, which ones accepted in modified form and which were rejected;

(c) whether Government has received some more suggestions from the Steel Industry after release of the National Mineral Policy (NMP);

(d) if so, the details in this regard and whether Government would consider their suggestions; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES (SHRI B.K. HANDIQUE): (a) and (b) While the Government has accepted most of the recommendations of the Hoda Committee, recommendations pertaining to discontinuing reservation of area for Public Sector Undertakings and deletion of certain provisions in the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957, and Mineral Concession Rules, 1960 giving State Governments discretionary powers to give preference to a later applicant, pre-empt the mineral produce from any mine and reduce or exclude an area while renewing mining leases, has not been accepted. The recommendation of Hoda Committee to grant reconnaissance permits, large area prospecting concessions or prospecting licences; auction of Government explored areas in grant of mineral concessions; setting up of Coordination-cum-Empowered Committee; and setting up of an independent dispute settlement mechanism have been modified.

(c) to (e) Suggestion are received from time to time from all stake holders including different sections of the Steel Industry, in relation to matter such as exports of iron ore, value addition, captive mining etc. Government has been giving due consideration to these suggestions within the ambit of declared policy in that regard.